

KCCD CCA Feedback: Bakersfield College's Distance Education Handbook

Multiple versions of the DE handbook are available with different page numbers. The page numbers listed at the top of each page of this document correspond with the version of the DE Handbook posted under the "Supporting Docs" section of the October 23, 2025 College Council meeting.

"CCA requests for deletion" are noted as such. Where I have used "Note," it indicates additional feedback provided to draw attention to a point that future writing teams may want to address in later versions of the DE Handbook.

For those College Council members less familiar with the faculty contract, the only portion of the collective bargaining agreement/contract that directly addresses online teaching is evaluation (Articles 6 and 7), and there only relatively briefly. Other brief mentions also occur regarding class size and office hours (Article 8). Article 4, which is frequently referenced in the DE Handbook by its title "Professional Expectations" has many subsections. These subsections are not noted, so it is not always clear which portions of the article the writer(s) believed applies. Where appropriate, I have provided the actual language that likely is being referenced.

Additional recommendation regarding language proposed by Senate but not yet added: CCA's understanding is that Academic Senate requested language be added noting that the DE Handbook shall not be used in faculty evaluations. **CCA recommends that language also note that the handbook shall not be used as a basis for discipline.**

On behalf of KCCD CCA, thank you for your consideration.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Distance Education Handbook Task Force for their input, time, and energy in researching for and creating the BC Distance Education (DE) Handbook.

Distance Education Handbook Task Force:

- Faculty Co-Chair – Anna Collins
- Administrative Co-Chair – Andrea Thorson
 - CCA Representative – Nancy Mai
 - Administrative Representatives – Dan Hall, Andrea Thorson
 - Student Representative – SGA Director of Student Activities
 - FCDC Representative (Department Chair) – Ginger LeBlanc
 - Faculty-at-large – Anna Collins (PHIL), Fabiola Butcher (COMM), Brent Burton (EMS/FIRE), Monica Garcia (BIOL), Kimberly Nickell (EDUC)
 - Classified Representative – Rita Jones

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Commented [AT1]: Note: Member reports she attended one initial meeting.

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Commented [AT2]: Note: Unclear. Is the name unknown, or did no student serve?

The DE Handbook Task Force wishes to thank the BC Academic Technology department, Academic Senate representatives, and CCA union members who gave us feedback throughout the process of creating this handbook. In addition, we wish to thank and acknowledge the work of the over 40 higher education institutions we researched. They walked this road before us and gave us invaluable inspiration and guidance in creating the policies and procedures for DE at BC. Special recognition is given to the faculty at CSU Bakersfield and College of the Canyons for their initial and continued support.

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Commented [AT3]: CCA requests removal: While it is certainly possible that faculty members who are also union members gave feedback, no CCA union members gave feedback on behalf of the union. The CCA representative on the taskforce did not participate in the writing of the handbook, and the taskforce did not present the handbook to CCA with a request for CCA feedback.

Finally, the DE Handbook Task Force would like to take a moment to acknowledge and celebrate our BC instructors' expertise as educators and subject matter experts. They are the heart of our academic community, and their deep knowledge, unique experiences, and dedication to students are what make Bakersfield College a place of meaningful, life-long learning.

As BC continues to evolve in its development of DE, this handbook should serve as a practical resource that supports each instructor's work. This handbook has been created to help DE instructors align their courses with ACCJC's accreditation standards, commitment to accessibility, and dedication to student success.

We look forward to sharing this resource with you. Thank you for the passion and dedication you bring to our students.

Writing Team:

Fabiola Butcher, Communication Department
Anna Collins, Philosophy Department
Dan Hall, Director of Academic Technology
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Andrea Thorson, Dean of Instruction

Introduction

This handbook provides guidance on the policies, procedures, and best practices for teaching Distance Education classes for Bakersfield College (BC). Distance Education (DE) is defined by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) as “a formal interaction designed for learning in which the interaction principally occurs when the student is separated by location from the instructor, resources used to support learning, or other students.”

At BC, DE refers to classes where interaction between instructors and students happens online through a Learning Management System (LMS). The required LMS for DE classes at BC is Canvas. To comply with California Title 5 regulations, DE classes must maintain the same academic rigor and curricular standards as their face-to-face counterparts. This handbook explains the Federal Title II, California Title 5, and ACCJC requirements for Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) and accessibility, framed around the principles of Organization, Preparation, and Implementation (OPI) of Canvas classes.

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Commented [AT4]: Note: It is not clear where these principles come from.

The guidelines set forth in this handbook were created in accordance with federal and state regulations (Appendix A), district policies and procedures, and collective bargaining agreements.

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Commented [AT5]: CCA requests deletion: CCA does not agree that the guidelines set forth accord with the collective bargaining agreement.

In alignment with Title II, Title 5, the ADA, and ACCJD standards, this handbook supports instructors in designing and delivering high-quality, student-centered online classes. It includes an easy-to-use DE OPI Checklist to streamline class development, an overview of laws governing DE, and helpful resources and examples.

This handbook and the policies within ensure alignment with BC’s mission to provide opportunities for students from diverse economic, cultural, and educational backgrounds in rigorous and supportive learning environments whether the learning environment is a physical classroom or an online space.

Accessibility

When creating DE classes and content, it is essential to consider the needs of students with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires programs and services, including educational programs, to be accessible to qualified persons with disabilities. This means that all class communications and multimedia used in DE must be equal, effective, and usable by all students when the class is published.

The proactive application of accessible design principles in DE class creation, as well as using assistive technology, ensures that DE classes are usable by all students, with or without disabilities. In Canvas, using PopeTech, UDOIT, and TidyUp resources can help identify and address accessibility issues in DE classes. In addition, all contracted, licensed, and third-party applications—including publisher-created content—must also meet accessibility standards.

The standards set by the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 have been updated to include the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), an internationally recognized set of guidelines and standards for accessibility. WCAG guidelines are based on principles that ensure content is Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Robust. While Canvas has embedded capabilities that ensure some of these guidelines are met automatically, many are still the responsibility of each instructor to know and adhere to when creating their classes and materials.

~~In alignment with the Community College Association (CCA) contract, Article 4 (Professional Expectations), instructors are expected to “...utilize alternative instructional delivery approaches to enhance student access.” As such,~~ DE instructors at BC will be expected to adhere to the proposed adopted KCCD standard, which is currently WCAG 2.2. ~~As technology and accessibility research evolve, future standards, including WCAG 3, will likely be adopted by KCCD and instructors will be expected to adjust accordingly.~~

Commented [AT6]: CCA requests deletion: CCA does not agree that this language in article 4 applies specifically to this topic.

Article 4.C.8: “Faculty Shall . . . As appropriate, utilize alternative instructional delivery approaches to enhance student access.”

Commented [AT7]: Note: This language suggests that faculty will be expected to figure out how to meet future requirements on their own.

Communication Plan

A Communication Plan informs students how and when they can expect to hear from their instructors as part of regular and effective communication. Recommended elements of a Communication Plan include:

- Preferred communication methods (e.g., Canvas Inbox, BC email, Announcements, Speedgrader)
- How often the instructor will interact in discussion boards
- The times and location of the instructor's office hours
- Check student communications (e.g., Canvas messenger, email) daily. Expected timeframe for replies to communications (48-hours, ~~excluding Sundays and holidays, is expected~~)
- Expected timeframe for graded feedback on assignments

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Commented [AT8]: Note: It is not clear whether the 48 hours are a requirement or an example.

Commented [AT9]: CCA requests deletion: Saturdays are not workdays for faculty unless there has been "written mutual agreement" for a "weekend assignment" (Article 8.G.1).

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Syllabus

In addition to the essential basic class information required in alignment with the CCA contract, ~~Article 4 (Professional Expectations),~~ a DE class syllabus should also clearly communicate:

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- Clear guidelines on communicating with the instructor and turn-around time on correspondence, feedback, and grades
- Technology, internet, software, and hardware requirements for the class
- Reminder that BC students get access to the Microsoft 365 for free with their BC email address
- Academic expectations presented with eIntegrity (the application of academic integrity principles as they relate specifically to technology and online educational spaces) emphasized
- Explicit policies on generative AI usage. The Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges (ASCCC) has provided guidelines for clear syllabus statements regarding AI usage depending on whether usage is Open, Conditional, Restricted, or Closed. . . .

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Canvas Class Implementation

Several key practices help ensure a successful launch and smooth implementation of DE classes.

Class Publishing

DE classes at BC officially start the Saturday before face-to-face classes begin. Classes should be published no later than 12:00 a.m. on the first day of class.

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Accessibility

Though accessibility should have been integrated in the organization and preparation stages, run the Canvas accessibility checker before publishing to address any missed issues. In addition, reach out to students who need DSPS accommodations to ensure their success from the beginning.

Instructor Engagement

DE classes require substantial front-loading to get ready to publish, but publishing the class is not where instructor engagement should end. A variety of tools are available in Canvas to keep communication open with students and help them stay engaged in learning throughout the course.

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DE Class Modality Descriptions

It is important to note that once scheduled, class modality, days, or times of meetings cannot be changed. ~~See CCA contract, Article 4 (Professional Expectations).~~

Synchronous Instruction: Class takes place online using the internet and a learning management system. Class meetings are scheduled, and instruction takes place in an online meeting space (e.g., Zoom). Class instruction is 100% online, though assignments and assessments can be assigned asynchronously. Synchronous classes provide students with an opportunity to complete classwork without attending classes on campus, while maintaining the lecture format and scheduled structure of a face-to-face class.

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Commented [AT13]: Note: The language here is not entirely accurate and the purpose is not entirely clear. For example, what does "once scheduled" mean? Who is prohibited from making changes?

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Article 4.C.11: "Faculty Shall . . . Not combine, cancel, or change meeting times or places of classes or activities without permission of the College President or designee"

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Appendix A: Laws and Regulations

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Requires programs and services, including educational programs, to be accessible to qualified persons with disabilities. Requires that all communications must be equal and effective.

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG): Currently in iteration WCAG 2.2 with WCAG 3 in the works, WCAG defines a set of standards that complies with various regulations and laws, including ADA and Section 508, to create a worldwide standard for accessibility on the web.

Federal Title II

- Rehabilitation Act, Section 504: Prohibits discrimination based on disability in educational settings which receive federal dollars.
- Rehabilitation Act, Section 508: Part of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 508 requires equal access to telecommunications for students with disabilities. This applies to students with disabilities enrolled in distance education classes.

California Title 5: Part of the California Code of Regulations that deals with education in California.

- **Section 55200** defines Distance Education and specifies that all online education content and delivery needs to be accessible.
- **Section 55208** states that instructors teaching classes in online or hybrid modalities must demonstrate online technology and pedagogical readiness.

Academic Freedom: Under the 1st Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, Academic Freedom protects instructors' freedom in the classroom when discussing their subject.

Fair Use: Part of the United States copyright law that allows for minimal reproduction of copyrighted works without gaining permission from the author(s). [For more details see CCA contract, Article 4 \(Professional Expectations\).](#)

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Commented [AT15]: Note: Academic Freedom covers more than this. (Ironically, the details are actually spelled out in Article 4.A.1-4.)

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Commented [AT16]: CCA requests deletion: There are no additional details in the contract.

Article 4.C.5: "Faculty Shall . . . Secure written permission to print copyrighted material in faculty handouts or syllabi"

Appendix F: OPI Checklist Alignment with ACCJC, OEI, and WCAG

The following list shows where each of the OPI Checklist items aligns with the rubrics for DE from ACCJC and OEI, as well as WCAG guidelines. A proposal for online teaching guidelines was made to BC’s Academic Senate while the task force was concurrently in the research stage of this handbook, and that document has also been considered. ~~In addition, all items on the checklist also align with the CCA contract, Article 4, Professional Expectations.~~

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Commented [AT17]: CCA request deletion: CCA does not agree that “all items on the checklist . . . align” with the contract.